

ABSTRACT

The present invention generally relates to the field of secure centralized single sign-on and session maintenance for web servers on the Internet. In a preferred implementation, a single sign-on protocol for use by web servers is independent of the
5 actual authentication mechanism used by any of the individual web servers accessed by the user. Users authenticate themselves with any one of a group of federated servers so that a user does not need to be re-authenticated by other servers in the federation. In a preferred implementation there is also a centralized server that provides for the transparent sign-on, session management, and session termination within each server in
10 the federation of servers, and each federated server communicates with the central sign-on server.